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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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HEALING VIRTUE IN CHRIST.

I will read to you an incident that is recorded in the 5th chapter of Mark's Gospel, beginning with the 24th verse :

"And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

This is but a single incident on a very busy day in the life of our Saviour. He had returned from the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He had been greeted by the accustomed throng, only now it was larger and more enthusiastic than usual. He was at Capernaum—his own city, as he called it; for it was the city where, after leaving Nazareth, he went to live. It was there that one of his disciples made him a great feast, and invited his friends and acquaintances. There, also, was witnessed that very significant and remarkable circumstance, the enthusiasm of publicans and sinners, drawn to him by some strange and mysterious influence. They did not pause even for an invitation, but broke into the dining-hall; and some of them sat with him; and he ate and drank with them.

There and everywhere, the world through, to eat and drink with one is a sign of fellowship; but in Oriental lands more peculiarly so than in our own; and that event brought upon him the charge that he was eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. The righteous Pharisees murmured, calling forth this memorable reply from our Master :

SUNDAY EVENING, May 4, 1873. LESSON: Mark iv. 1-20. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 660, 759, 725.

"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." "They that be whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick."

When this repast was finished, he was assailed by John's disciples. John, their master, that rigid and highly abstemious man, had been thrown into prison by reason of his fidelity to Jesus, who professed to be his friend, who was baptized by him, and who was sitting in the house of one of his disciples at a royal banquet, eating and drinking, and acting as though he enjoyed it. The Pharisees found fault with him, and the disciples of John found fault with him; the former because he ate with publicans and sinners, and the latter because he ate at all. John's disciples said, "Why do not your disciples fast? John taught his disciples to fast." The reply of Christ was, "Why should they fast? They are not unhappy. When the days come that they are unhappy, then it will be time enough for them to display the signs of unhappiness. There is nothing imperative, nothing necessitous, in fasting."

While he was thus discoursing with them, there came to him a ruler, a man of eminence, saying, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death;" and beseeching him to go and heal her. Jesus arose and followed him; but the crowd would not be dismissed. They were fascinated with his discourse, and they thronged his way. And what a crowd it was! A rabble gathered out of our streets, composed of all sorts and kinds of people, would seem decent compared with a crowd in an Oriental country, where there was so much poverty, where poverty was so squalid, and where ill fare and bad housing led to so many diseases—especially where affections of the eye were almost universal, and where men broke out with all manner of skin diseases, clear down to leprosy itself. Along the highway were human beings of every description: the rich and the poor; the Pharisees and the Saducees; the rulers and the ruled; young men and maidens; old men and children—mixed, doubtless, with some foreigners, for Galilee was full of the detritus of almost all nations.

There was this great rolling crowd; and as Jesus went on, there fell out, here and there, little incidents, some of which are recorded; and among them was this one, which is a kind of interlude, or episode, of his journey, whose mission was the healing of the little child of the ruler.

We know not what those thousands of people thought as he was thus going forward. Some had mere thoughts of curiosity. The thoughts of some were controversial. Some were marveling, gaping, and waiting for a miracle. Some, perhaps, were wishing that the miracle of the loaves and fishes would be renewed. All sorts of

thoughts there were. But there was in this great crowd a poor creature who was in need, and whose object was to get relief.

Her name is not given. It is a little remarkable how many of the personages that are connected with incidents in Scripture, and that interest us profoundly, are without a name. The widow, with her mites, who called down the Saviour's benediction; the Syrophenician woman, who brought her daughter to be healed; the father, whose son was possessed of demons—neither of these has name or history, so far as any record in Scripture is concerned.

As a picture from a magic lantern is dashed upon the screen, is looked at for a moment, then vanishes, and is gone; so different persons come upon the stage in the narratives of the Evangelists, enact perfect dramas, exquisite in texture and construction, and momentous in moral bearing, and then pass away. There is no lineage, no record, no name; and yet all is so vivid and powerful.

As to this woman, whether she was a Jew or a Gentile, whether or not she was in good standing in society, we know not. She is simply spoken of as "a certain woman." She was in this great throng for a purpose. She seems to have suffered from infirmity. It is to be inferred that she was a person of reflection and decision; and yet, she seems to have had a tremulous, sensitive nature, which held her back from any very positive overt or declarative action. But she needed a friend. She was sick; and what is all the world worth when one is sick? What is all that is presented to the eye, what is the income of the ear, what are all the treasures of life worth under such circumstances? What is everything that can be desired worth when one is thoroughly sick? Sickness takes the flavor out of everything. It changes the whole current and course of desire and feeling. She had long been sick. She had worn out years in sickness, and those years had well nigh worn her out. *All that a man hath will he give for his life.*

She had gone to her own physician, and he could do nothing for her. Honest, faithful, and skilled, doubtless, according to the measure of those times, her case defied his ability. She heard of another physician of eminence, and went to him; but all he could do availed nothing. Little by little, her substance melted away. Twelve years of doctoring! one must be well off to go through that. Her little patrimony, whatever it was; all her earnings, whatever they were, had been laudably consecrated to an end which was natural and right. But supposing her to have been surrounded by honest, faithful, and skillful physicians, there is many and many a disease that the best physician cannot heal; and those to whom she had applied could not cure her. So it is said, in very

simple and affecting language, "She was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." After taking nauseous drug after nauseous drug, she was worse instead of better.

Therefore there was nothing for her to do but drag out her years in misery. Alas, how sad it is not to have a constitution strong enough to throw off disease, and yet so strong that disease cannot kill you! If men could only get well or die, one of the two, that would be endurable; but to hang half way between health and death, to be as good as dead when you are about in life, that is wretched indeed. And that was her case. The days and nights were without light and comfort to her.

Well, she had heard of Jesus. Who had not? The whole land rang with his name. There was not a child that did not know some amazing story of him. The very beggars had heard of him. He had been heard of by those who did not go near the synagogue. The Roman soldiers, the Roman centurions, the Pharisees, everybody had heard of Jesus. She, among others, had heard of him; and, seeing or hearing that he was passing by, and beholding a great throng, she joined herself to them. They were rushing forward, and pushing each other hither and thither, to keep up with the Saviour—most of them, doubtless, from comparatively ignoble motives. But here was a person who came into this throng with a purpose. She thought, "Here is one who heals the sick, and raises the very dead; and it may be that he will heal me."

If she had been a woman of overt courage she would have gone before the Saviour's face, and stopped him, and asked him to heal her. I infer that she was a woman of great sensibility, by reason of her whole manner. She stole up to the Saviour. She did not dare to face him. She seems to have been under the impression that she had done wrong. The least thing she ever did, probably, she confessed as if it had been a sin against Christ. We see in her conduct indications of great sensibility; and yet, her whole course shows that she had a purpose, and had good sense in forming it and carrying it out.

My friends, how many there are who are just like her—who are sick—only not in body. They are sick in heart, in soul, in the understanding. Their minds are perverted, so that they do not know the truth. Their consciences are torpid, and they get no light and no condemnation from them. They are sick, in pride, that distempers their doubts. They are sick in the sense of right and wrong, which is perpetually turning the key the wrong way to wind up the machinery of life. They are sick, because they are living as if the animal life were the whole or the best part of life.

They are sick because, like a plant that is hidden from the sun, they are hidden from God, and cannot grow with health and strength.

How many there are that are sick! How many there are that, being sick, know it! How many there are that, knowing they are sick, have tried to remedy their sickness! They have sought many physicians; that is to say, they have plied themselves with a thousand nostrums. They have resorted to one, and another, and another means, for the healing of that which can be healed only by the radical prescription of the divine and omnipotent Physician. How many have set themselves upon rounds of consecutive duties, hoping that, by a faithful observance of them, by performing, at such and such times, such and such tasks, by regular attendance upon religious services, they shall bring themselves into a state in which they shall feel better! And how many, after having gone through a series of prescriptions like these, have felt no better—on the whole, have rather seemed worse!

Many such turn themselves, honestly, every whither. They go to one and to another church. They listen to one and to another administrator of the truth. They make vows and covenants. Sometimes they pray. Frequently they read the Word of God. They do a thousand things. But they are no better. That is to say, they are not happy. They have a sense of unrest. There is distemperature in their disposition. Home does not make them happy. Pleasures fly away from them. Business does not satisfy them. Although, for a moment, their inward thoughts may be covered by outward enjoyments, how many there are who cannot long hide from themselves their grief, and the cause that lies behind it! How many are in a state in which, if they look into themselves, they must say, "With all our efforts, we are no happier, but, if possible, more unhappy!"

How few of these persons are as wise as the woman of whom we are speaking. She availed herself of the chance which was afforded her to become healed. Her meeting with Christ was not the result of any forethought and planning on her part. She was conscious of her sickness; but she knew not which way to turn; and, having heard of this greatest of all Physicians, and seeing that he was passing, she embraced the opportunity to try what he could do for her. They, diseased, suffering from leprosy, defiled in the inward man, without holiness, or happiness, or spiritual power, unfruitful in good, fruitful only in evil, yet believe in God and in heaven, and long to have some evidence in themselves that they are heirs of immortality and glory; and still, they are without hope and without God in the world.

Now, to such there come just such chances as came to this woman. That is, Jesus passes by. There are a thousand opportunities, there are a thousand points of time, when the truth of God might be brought home to them searchingly, and might have practical efficacy with them, and when they might rid themselves of trouble, and cast off the burden from their souls—might escape from sickness, and find health.

Let us continue the history of this woman. What to her was all that crowd? She carried in herself that which occupied all her thought, and she said within herself, "Who am that I should speak with him? How could I bear his look?" There was something in the port and in the look of Christ, at times, which no man could bear. Evidently there was in his manner, at times, an overwhelming majesty. Perhaps she had seen him at some of these times, and did not dare to go before his face. She said in herself, perhaps, "If I steal up to him, so gracious is he, so wonderful is his power, and such miracles has he performed, that it may be that a very touch of his garment would heal me."

Ah! it is a good thing for men to be filled with grace to such a degree as that their unconscious moods and unpurposed influence shall be healing, as well as the things which they intend. So it was with our Master. Purposely he cast out demons. He set persons free from insanities. He quenched the fire of fevers. Dropsies were dried up by him. Men were brough to health on every side through his instrumentality. With a word, with a gesture, with a look, with a touch, he did great works of beneficence. But so full was he of divine savor, of spiritual power, that his very garments, as it were, were imbued with it; and when the woman stole up and touched the hem of his garment, straightway she experienced a joyful release. Oh, soul-filling suprise! She that for twelve years had not known one hour's exemption from disease, felt the sovereign balm of perfect health flow through her veins; and she stood restored! She was well!

Oh, how sweet to the convalescent is the first ride! How savory to one that has been deadly sick, and has come back to health, is the first permission to partake freely of food! How grateful to those who have long been deprived of the light, is the privilege of seeing the shining of the sun again! To one who has been diseased, and is restored to his normal condition, how delightful it is to feel once more the blood coursing through the veins in the old way! How wondrous are the sensations of renewed health, when it comes with any degree of positiveness and suddenness! And she who had known weary nights and dark hours; she who had experienced all manner

of annoyances and mortifications, and had lost her means, and her patience, and her faith, and her hope, and had been going down, down, down; she who had tried everything to no purpose—she, now, at last, had this thought cross her mind—"Who knows but this great Physician may have something in his very garments which, if I touch them, will bring health to me?" And, sure enough, no sooner did she touch his garments than health flashed through her joyful veins! She was young again!

Well, ought she not, in that very instant, to have cried out? Ought she to have taken such bounty and to have borne no witness to it? It is true that she did not say anything; but her silence was not altogether from ingratitude. It may have been a relative want of appreciation of the greatness of the favor. She may have said to herself, "How do I know that it is anything more than my imagination? I will say nothing about it until I am sure;"—just as a great many persons, when they begin to feel the saving power of the divine spirit in their souls, say, "I will not speak of this; I will wait; I will see what it is." She may have said, "How can I speak of this? My lips refuse to open; I can not speak." It may have been sensibility, delicacy of feeling, shrinkingness, that kept her from speaking. How many there are who believe that they have been pardoned, and that the blood of Christ which takes away the stain of sin has healed them, but who consult their sensibility and their shrinking tastes, and say, "How can I speak of this?" And it does not look as though it were wicked. Yet, if there be anything that a person ought to acknowledge, it is obligations which touch the great core of things.

He who has been healed by a faithful physician should be the friend of that physician as long as he lives. It may be that he acted professionally; it may be that he took his fee; but money never pays a physician who performs his duty faithfully. If your child has come back from death, never forget the faithful old nurse that made her bosom a cradle in which the child rocked, and gave her days and nights to the care of it. For such service as hers nothing material can be an adequate compensation. If your companion has been rescued from the grave by the skill and fidelity of a physician, mark him down in the calendar of your love, and never lose an opportunity to bear witness to your appreciation of what he has done for you. For, although you pay his bill, you do not thus cancel your whole indebtedness to him. The stores of love that were saved to you through his interference cannot be measured by mere coin. The debt is one that only the heart can pay.

We are ungrateful in a thousand ways which we hardly suspect.

We do not pay what we owe to men who enfranchise our understanding. Authors who give us a higher and nobler conception of life; poets who give wings to our fancy, so to speak, enabling us to fly higher than ordinary men, who stumble and fall down in the midst of the vulgarities of society; those who make virtue beauteous, and draw us to it,—who can repay the services of such as these? Men scarcely know what they owe to those who fortify them in virtue; to those who make it plain to them that integrity is safe under all circumstances; to those who have walked before them in the beauty of holiness; to those who have redeemed them from the conception that religion is a bondage, and led them to see that it was an efflorescent garden full of sweet delights. There is among men a great lack of the sense of their obligation toward those who have served them.

And here was this woman to whom Christ had given, by her touch of his garments, leave to be well again. He caused wholesome blood to flow through her veins once more. He restored her to health. And yet she made no outward recognition of what he had done for her. She made no visible sign of thankfulness for the blessing which she had received at his hands. Was it right for her to accept the great bounty of her life and shrink back without acknowledging it? Methinks mere delicacy and fastidiousness, mere caution, mere prudence, a mere waiting to see whether the thing were genuine, restrained her for one single moment from that praise and thanksgiving which should have broken forth from her lips instantly; but our Master read her heart all the time, and was not angry with her, nor did he chide her. He had done her great service, and meant to do her more; and so he stopped the crowd, and turned around and said, "Who touched me?" So great was the crowd that, as they went along with impetuosity, one and another jostled him, and hustled him from side to side continually; and one spoke up (of course it was Peter), and said, "Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, 'Who touched me?'" Our Saviour did not deign a reply. He stood and *looked round about!* This is an instance of the exhibition of the searching power of the eye of Christ. And you will recollect another place where, when he was told that his mother and his brethren desired to see him, he looked round about on the multitude, and said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" If you will notice those little expressions which represent him as *looking*, or *looking round*, you will find that some of the weightiest humanities of Christ were effected by his throwing himself into a position in which he searched the multitude with

his eye, and gave a look which added emphasis to his instruction.

So in this case, he looked around upon the crowd, and his eye rested on the woman, and he said, "Who touched me?" She could keep back no longer. The secret was out. She who had felt the virtue of healing felt also the searching power of his eye; and when she found there was no longer any concealment, her feelings gave way, and with a gush of enthusiasm she rushed forward, and cast herself down before him, and told him her whole story. She told him how sick she had been; how much she had suffered; what she had heard of him; what she had purposed to do; how she had done it; and what had come to pass. It was a sweet confession; but it was not half so sweet as the benignity and the paternal benediction which fell from the lips of the Saviour—"Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." This is the very majesty of tenderness and gentleness.

I hardly need to pause and make an application of this—the necessity which every man is under of confessing that which he receives from the touch of the Divine Spirit. It is right for you to live moral lives, and virtuous lives, and spiritual lives. Not only is it right, but you are under obligation to do it, and it is your highest happiness. No man has a right to arrogate to his own skill that which he succeeds in doing. And especially when men are living in the light of hope; when they are filled with the power of that life which they know is divine; when it is by faith of God's pardoning mercy through Jesus Christ that they feel their souls to be cheered; when they look away through the grave and see eternal mansions, and are able to call them their own,—then they have no right to be dumb or mute. To be so would be ungrateful.

I do not mean that every person must, of necessity, rise up in the household of faith and make a literal declaration or explanation; but I hold that every father and mother in the family should bear witness to the children that their Christian lives are lived by faith of the Son of God. I hold that no man in society who is living a life which he is conscious is inspired by God's Spirit has any right to withhold that testimony.

This is the very way in which the Gospel is to be preached. It is by the vital power of Christian souls exerted upon other souls that the work of God's grace among men is to be carried forward. And he that receives divine help and never owns it; he that is from day to day healed of selfishness, and restrained in pride, and lifted higher on the heavenly road, and makes no confession of his faith

in the Lord Jesus Christ, and bears no testimony of his obligation, is not without guilt. It is every man's duty, for his own sake, to honor Christ by witnessing that the life which he lives in the flesh, he lives by faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him.

There is another thought to which I wish to give expression in connection with this subject. We read that when our Saviour, on one occasion, was preaching in the synagogue, there was present a man with a withered hand. It was on the Sabbath-day, and the Saviour was there in his professional character; and it is to be supposed that persons reading how he called on the man to stretch forth his hand, and healed him, would say, "This was all right: it was on Sunday, and in the synagogue, and he was teaching; and it was proper that a miracle should be performed." But, on the occasion of which we are speaking, Christ was not in the synagogue, and it was not the Sabbath-day. It was on the road, and on some other day of the week. He was going on a special errand. But never was there a time when he was so engaged in any duty that he could not stop and do good. There never was a moment in which it was not safe to appeal to his kindness and love. He never let men wait, unless by waiting the blessing was to be reduplicated.

There was another instance in which persons on the road, and having an errand, did not stop to do good. I refer to the parable of the Good Samaritan. There were a priest and a levite, engaged in the same service as our Master, who were on a professional errand, which they regarded as too important to be interrupted for the performance of an act of humanity. A poor fellow, robbed, beaten, cast down, wounded and half dead, lay on the ground, and the priest seeing him, *passed by*. He would have stopped, doubtless, if he had not had something else to do; but he had an errand, and he went on. A levite came and *looked on him;* but looking on a man does not help him. He had something to do, he was on a journey, and he could not stop to take care of all the wretched folks that were on the road; and he went on. But a Samaritan *went where he was*, and *had compassion on him*, and *took care of him*.

Here were the priest and the levite, who were on professional errands, and could not stop; but our Master was on a more urgent errand than theirs. Jairus had a little daughter, twelve years old—the very witching age; the very time when the child hovers between girlhood and womanhood, and when the deepest sympathies are touched in her behalf; and he said, "She lieth at the point of death." The Saviour's duty was plain; the appeal was one which he could not disregard; and he had a right to say, "I am in haste,

I must speed on my way for another purpose:" but this poor woman found him ready, surcharged; and the power of his healing touch struck through her, and restored her.

Brethren, every Christian man and every Christian woman should carry with them such a healing power, such an overflowing love, such wealth of goodness and piety, that when others come to them for help, there shall instantly, if I may so say, be a back-action of sympathy, which shall bless them, as this woman was blessed by Christ's healing power.

We shall meet her hereafter. We know not her name or her history. Doubtless her voice has long mingled with the choral songs of heaven. She can say, "By his power was I redeemed from bodily sin, but by his greater power was I redeemed from the sins of the soul." She has gone up to be with Christ; her record is with God; and those who have trusted in the same Saviour have found the same release, and the same resurrection, and are in glory.

Are there none here to-night who have burdened consciences? Are there none here who are drooping with fear? Are there none who are suffering from the anguish of remorse? Are there none who have wandered far away from God? Are there none who have undone their souls? Are there none to whom the Saviour may be a benefactor? Venture upon him. Speak to him. Fall down before him. Ask the touch of saving grace at his hands. Or, if your heart fail, communicate your desire by any sign or token. It needs not any great exhibition. A look, oftentimes, is more eloquent, and pleads more, than any words. A touch upon the very garment of the Saviour, in her exigency, was all-sufficient in the case of this woman. When the very back of Christ was turned upon her, she knew how to invoke saving health from him.

That same Christ is still in power, and is still healing. He is your Christ and my Christ, your Saviour and my Saviour; and if any soul is despondent, dying, struck through and through with the disease of sin, I preach to you the salvation which is by faith of the Son of God. Go to him, and cast yourself on his mercy and goodness. He will not fail you. He will save you here, and redeem you with an everlasting salvation in the kingdom of his glory.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, O Lord, that thou art faithful to thy promises, and dost exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think. But what thou hast done we know not; for we do not understand thy way of working. We do not understand how thy Spirit doth fulfil its mission, and how our souls are made stronger, and richer, and wiser, and better. We do not understand how thou dost temper us. We cannot measure, with any knowledge that we now have, what is thy work, what is all its significance, nor what is its hope and promise. For thou art working wondrously, though silently. In the secret recesses of our nature, thy Spirit dwells. Thou art teaching us to repress that which is evil, and to develop that which is good. Thou art inspiring us with a desire to live by faith, and not by sight; by hope, and not by fruition. Thou art more and more leading us toward thyself, in aspiration —in thoughts of perfectness. Thou art teaching the people patience, and long-suffering, and kindness, and forbearance. Thou art hardening them to the work of life; and through many stripes and chastisements thou art loving them. Thou art teaching them to bear the yoke and to carry the burden. Thou art teaching them to endure hardships. Thou art repressing the eager desires of their nature, and teaching them to live in contentment with such things as they have, so that they shall draw more and more by faith from the eternal sphere. Thou art teaching them as good servants to do the work of life, and perform all its functions as they are laid upon them by thy providence; and thou art building up by them the household of faith.

We thank thee that thou art teaching men how to be faithful; how in all their affairs to maintain integrity; how to serve their fellow men by their lives. We thank thee that thou art teaching some to maintain their walk and conversation in the midst of abounding prosperities. We thank thee that thou art teaching the world that it is not needful that happiness should seduce men, and take them away from the service of God. We do not know what seed thou art sowing, nor how it grows night and day, nor what shall be the fruit of it in the time to come. We rejoice to believe that all thy dealings with us in this world are only to be read and understood in the other life. Joy is not always joyful, and sorrow is not always sorrowful. Whom thou lovest thou chastenest, and scourgest every son whom thou receivest.

We pray, O Lord, that we may have faith to believe that, rewarding us or punishing us, exalting us or pressing us down, thine office and work is to make us worthy to be called the sons of God, and to prepare us to go from this sphere to another and higher one, where nobler tasks and nobler lives await us.

We pray that thou wilt draw near to all who are present to-night, and open their understandings to divine truth. Draw near, we pray thee, to all who are in trouble; to all who are burdened; to all who feel remorse for sin; to all who are filled with anxiety, and doubt, and fear; to all who are weary and ready to perish; to all whose faith and perseverance are well nigh spent.

We pray that thou wilt be a merciful Saviour in our midst to-night. Draw by the sweetness of thine invitation those who linger far from thee. Remind of their vows those that have promised in times gone by to serve thee—some in sickness, some in great vicissitudes, some in dangers imminent. May they look to thee for strength to enable them to fulfill the vows and promises which they have uttered.

We pray for any who have wandered. Bring them back again. We pray for those who do not pray for themselves. We pray for the prayerless

children of praying parents. We pray for those who have forsaken the sanctuary of their fathers, and forgotten their fathers' God, and have departed from virtue, and sought their own ends, and done their own will, and tasted the bitter fruits of disobedience, and are looking wistfully toward the old way and the established paths. Are there not such in thy presence? and wilt not thou whose providence has graciously brought them hither go on with thy work? We pray that they may have their eyes opened, and their consciences unsealed; that the word of God may come to them to-night with searching power and with convincing and comforting influence.

We pray that thou wilt go forth with pitying thoughts to all those for whom we should pray, and to all those whom we delight to pray for. Remember our absent friends, wherever they are. Remember all who have labored with us in thy cause. Be with all those in every land who are preaching Christ to-day. Strengthen, we beseech thee, those in obscure and waste places who are discouraged by the greatness of the way.

We pray that thy kingdom may be advanced everywhere, at home and abroad, on continents and on the isles of the sea; and that the name of Jesus may be uttered in every land. May darkness flee away from his presence. Come and fulfill those promises which seem so long in ripening. Fill the whole earth with thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise forever more. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the word spoken. May we rejoice not in ourselves, but in the great power and goodness of our ascended Saviour. Though thou hast gone up on high, thou art everywhere; and no cry, how feeble soever it may be, fails to reach thine ear. No heart, wherever it may be, that flies to thee with uplifted hand of supplication, is without thine attention. None bemoan their hardness, their sinfulness, their everlasting want, which cannot be medicated by time nor by their own skill and knowledge, and come to thee, and venture on thee, and trust thee, and go away unhealed. Blessings be upon thy name, O thou ascended Jesus! What mercies hast thou shaken down! Thy paths drop fatness! Through the ages, how many poor, how many ignorant, how many that were ready to perish, have been saved! What multitudes hast thou gathered! Still thou art gathering; and innumerable heroes shall yet rise up from the peopled earth to praise thee. May our souls take part with theirs. May we meet thee in the air, and claim thy healing power, and receive health in our souls, and confess it. May we believe in thee, and be received by thee into thy kingdom at last. And to thy name, Father, Son and Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PLYMOUTH PULPIT.

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